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PARNASSUS  
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IN MEMORIUM: PABLO NERUDA 1904-1973

THE DICTATORS

An odor has remained among the sugarcane:  
a mixture of blood and body, a penetrating  
petal that brings nausea.  
Between the coconut palms the graves are full  
of ruined bones, of speechless death-rattles.  
The delicate dictator is talking  
with top hats, gold braid, and collars.  
The tiny palace gleams like a watch  
and the rapid laughs with gloves on  
cross the corridors at times  
and join the dead voices  
and the blue mouths freshly buried.  
The weeping cannot be seen, like a plant  
whose seeds fall endlessly on the earth,  
whose large blind leaves grow even without light.  
Hatred has grown scale on scale,  
blow on blow, in the ghastly water of the swamp,  
without a snout full of ooze and silence.

Pablo Neruda

(translated by Robert Bly)

## THE UNITED FRUIT CO.

When the trumpet sounded, it was  
 all prepared on the earth,  
 and Jehovah parceled out the earth  
 to Coca-Cola, Inc., Anaconda,  
 Ford Motors, and other entities:  
 The Fruit Company, Inc.  
 reserved for itself the most succulent,  
 the central coast of my own land,  
 the delicate waist of America.  
 It rechristened its territories  
 as the "Banana Republics"  
 and over the sleeping dead,  
 over the restless heroes  
 who brought about the greatness,  
 the liberty and the flags,  
 it established the comic opera:  
 abolished the independencies,  
 presented crowns of Caesar,  
 unsheathed envy, attracted  
 the dictatorship of the flies,  
 Trujillo flies, Tacho flies,  
 Carias flies, Martinez flies,  
 Ubico flies, damp flies  
 of modest blood and marmalade,  
 drunken flies who zoom  
 over the ordinary graves,  
 circus flies, wise flies  
 well trained in tyranny.  
 Among the bloodthirsty flies  
 the Fruit Company lands it ships,  
 taking off the coffee and the fruit;  
 the treasure of our submerged  
 territories flows as though  
 on plates into the ships.

Meanwhile Indians are falling  
 into the sugared chasms  
 of the harbors, wrapped  
 for burial in the mist of the dawn:  
 a body rolls, a thing  
 that has no name, a fallen cipher,  
 a cluster of dead fruit  
 thrown down on the dump.

Pablo Neruda

(translated by Robert Bly)

## SEXUAL WATER

Rolling down in big and distinct drops,  
 in drops like teeth,  
 in heavy drops like marmalade and blood,  
 rolling down in big drops, the water  
 is falling,  
 like a sword made of drops,  
 like a river of glass that tears things,  
 it is falling, biting,  
 beating on the axle of symmetry, knocking on the seams  
     of the soul,  
 breaking abandoned things, soaking the darkness.

It is nothing but a breath, more full of moisture than  
     crying,  
 a liquid, a sweat, an oil that has no name,  
 a sharp motion,  
 taking shape, making itself thick,  
 the water is falling  
 in slow drops  
 toward the sea, toward its dry ocean,  
 toward its wave without water.

I look at the wide summer, and a loud noise coming from  
     a barn,  
 wineshops, cicadas,  
 towns, excitements,  
 houses, girls  
 sleeping with hands over their hearts,  
 dreaming of pirates, of conflagrations,  
 I look at ships,  
 I look at trees of bone marrow  
 bristling like mad cats,



I look at blood, daggers and women's stockings,  
 and men's hair,  
 I look at beds, I look at corridors where a virgin is  
     sobbing,  
 I look at blankets and organs and hotels.

I look at secretive dreams,  
 I let the straggling days come in,  
 and the beginnings also, and memories also,  
 like an eyelid help open hideously  
 I am watching.

And then this sound comes:  
 a red noise of bones,  
 a sticking together of flesh  
 and legs yellow as wheatheads meeting.  
 I am listening among the explosion of the kisses,  
 I am listening, shaken among breathings and sobs.

I am here, watching, listening,  
 with half of my soul at sea and half of my soul on land,  
 and with both halves of my soul I watch the world.

And even if I close my eyes and cover my heart over  
     entirely,  
 I see the monotonous water falling  
 in big monotonous drops.  
 It is like a hurricane of gelatin,  
 like a waterfall of sperm and sea anemones.  
 I see a clouded rainbow hurrying.  
 I see its water moving over my bones.

Pablo Neruda

(translated by James Wright  
                     and Robert Bly)

Neruda is dead today  
 and his country is dying  
 in silence.  
 This silence is a lie.  
 It is an atrocity.  
 In his country  
 the generals smash the teeth of poets;  
 pry open their mouths  
 and slash their tongues with bayonets.  
 The eyes of an artist are nailed  
 to his mural.  
 The eyes are still dripping fluids  
 on a proclamaion which reads:

This man  
 has willed his eyes  
 to the government

Then the tanks come to play with the children;  
 the treads rip the toys from their arms  
 and squeeze the children into the pavement;  
 the mothers shriek and beat insanely  
 against the grunting metal  
 they smash their fists to jelly  
 against the olive tanks smeared with human pulp.  
 Fathers and husbands and sons disappear  
 through a door shattered by rifle butts.  
 In the entrance way which is spattered  
 with dark blood,  
 a man's shoe is left on the floor.  
 And the generals sit, elegantly, smoking cigarettes;  
 and they crush them. Completely crush them  
 with just the tips of their fingers  
 in the crystal ashtrays.  
 Crush them until the fire is dead.  
 Then some aide, smiling at their elegance,  
 empties the broken pieces and wipes the crystal clean.

And the silence comes.  
 The city is a carcass.  
 It will not look or speak.  
 Its voice becomes the directive  
 from the loudspeakers, a bastard electric voice  
 that salutes itself.  
 That screams orders to the earth: Open!  
 and receive the dead.  
 That warns the mountains it must  
 exchange its copper for the dead.  
 Even the air must carry the stinking  
 smell of the dead so that every room  
 will have vomit soaking in one corner.  
 And the sea washes the sand clean  
 and hides the black bodies from the flies.



Then the generals come to stand on the balconies.  
They admire the silence and their importance.  
Buttons gleam, visors shine, even the soles  
of their boots have been scraped clean.

Silence?

Yes, my generals, there will be silence.

Silence

until you hear the earth tear itself with grief.

Silence

until the mountains rip apart in anger.

Silence

until the wind comes screaming

carrying huge stones in its teeth

from the ancient places and

carrying the bones of hidden warriors

and the murdered voices

who will seek for you everywhere

and destroy you.

Silence

until the sea returns the dead to their country.

And when the dead can be forgotten

then there will be silence.

by James Byrnes

## TRAGEDY

In Lorca's Blood Wedding  
 as soon as the bride's servant  
 tells of horse and rider standing  
 beneath the bride's window at three in the morning  
 we know the rider:  
 Leonardo, the bride's first sweetheart,  
 two years married to her cousin, cousin  
 to the killers of the bridegroom's father and brother,  
 he'll come to the wedding with something on his mind.  
 We know they will run off, Leonardo and the bride  
 We know they will die, Leonardo and the bridegroom  
 We know they'll survive, the bride and the mother:  
 a world coheres  
 where a mother licks her first son's blood after he has fallen,  
 where the dead are carried off and one must keep still,  
 and a shriek's  
 always  
 standing tiptoe  
 in a mother's breast.

Bernard Horn

TRY TO GET USED, AND YOU'LL SURELY FIND IT HOW CONVENIENT

"What I would like to do, what I would really like to do, is just write a nice little story, or even a poem, if it came to that, that would show some real facet of human life. Something that would transcend words."

"I see. What you mean is, you wish to bridge the gap between contemplation and action. That is a very difficult task. It has plagued philosophers and artists since such people existed. What is the obstacle, or what are the obstacles between you and your goal?"

"Well, actually, there are a myriad of obstacles, I'm sure, but I don't know what they are. What I am trying to do right now is all negative. I'm trying to avoid things, like sounding stupid, or using too many words, or even using the wrong words. It's next to impossible to find the right word sometimes, and when nothing else will do, it can drive you nuts.

For example, there, what I just said. Well, I didn't want to use the word "nuts", and I know that there is another word which is much better suited to the occasion, but I can't come up with it. I know that a thesaurus would help me, but usually I figure that the right word is only partly important, and that I can get around it. Besides, there are so many words that I would rather use than the ones I do use, that I would never finish writing anything if I used one of those. On top of all that, I can't stand the cataloging system in a thesaurus. Words are listed under titles like EMOTION 332-360. It sounds like a psychology course in a college catalog."

"Well, what do you want to write about? What is so important that you have to tell the world about it?"

"Absolutely nothing. I have no intention of writing for the world. I write for myself, because it makes me feel good. What kind of a state is the world in anyway? Everyone I know seems to be walking around on some other planet. Or at least some other decade. Not that they have much choice, I suppose, seeing as the Seventies haven't started yet, except for the food shortage. Still, I can't find any excuse for these folks. What are they doing? How do they find an excuse for their existence? There seems to be two classes of mankind today: the sanitary engineers and the electronic technicians, and they get together on Friday to celebrate the coming week-end.

But the hell with that, I'm no social commentator. I don't have to be, because I've got all the answers. 'How can you explain a pear to someone who has never taken a bite of one?' That's a Chinese proverb. There have always been a few cats who knew the score, and they only talked to each other, they knew it was useless to try to relate experience, since no one ever gets the point anyway."

"Why are you so hostile?"

"Hostile! Who's hostile? I think people are crazy, blind, and wasteful, but I'm not hostile towards them, I love them. They're wonderfu. But I'm not going to get roped into any more social commentary. Besides, I can't say enough about myself if I answer a question like that, because obviously I'm going to transfer everything onto someone else and get it so confused, that I'll never figure it out. Look, all I wanted to do was find out how to write something that would be more than an abstract painting of black squirms on white background. Obviously I'm not getting any help.

There is something that has been bothering me lately, and maybe you can tell me the answer, since nobody else can. I don't know what it is about being a saint, but I'd like to tell you, it isn't easy. Every time you try to get a question answered, people think that you're giving them a parable, or asking rhetorically. Anyway, (I still use "anyway" too much) here's the problem: I want to know if cats and dogs hated each other before they became domesticated."

"That's impossible. How can I know the answer to a question like that? Nobody remembers whether cats and dogs hated each other. How could anyone know? If they didn't hate each other, then it has been bred into them instinctually to hate each other, so you couldn't even raise one of each in a laboratory and put them together to find out. Besides, it is cat and dog nature to hate each other. Why should you even question where it came from?"

"Well, sorry, but I won't take the blame this time. It's not my fault you don't know the answer. But I'll tell you what I think. I think people made cats and dogs hate each other so that magazines could have more cartoons in them. There is no other purpose to those two animals being enemies. They don't eat each other, they eat dead animals that live in cans. They don't interfere with each other, except over who gets to sleep in the garage. And it gets everyone mad when the cats and dogs start up. I agree with the editors, that some of the cartoons are hilarious, but that's all there is to it."

"You're paranoid, or schizoid or something. What kind of logic do you think with?"

"You won't believe this, but when PC told me I was needed, I had a different story all planned. I was going to write about a woman who was so bored she decided to go crazy. Somebody who knows about these things happened to mention it once, but I don't think she realized how deeply it caught my imagination. Anyway, this woman covered her kitchen walls with human waste and sat down in a chair until her husband came home and called a psychiatrist who, I imagine, had the woman committed. The thing is, this woman knew what she was doing. She was well aware

of the implications and subtleties of her act, but she decided to go crazy and see what everyone would do. The question my story wished to ask was this: "Was that woman really crazy or not?"

(Note to the reader: Although my signature appears at the bottom of this, I am not the true author. The person who did write it wishes not to be identified. I agreed to put it in my name only on the condition that I not receive any credit for what I consider one of the finest little stories to ever appear in these august pages. For reasons of funding, the Staff of Parnassus has asked me to assure them that this was written by a NECC student, this much I have done, but no further identification will be forthcoming, at least not from me.)

James C. Gallagher  
ID # 10390

### Friendship

Freedom is it's definition,  
That bonding but non-binding thing.  
Yes, that is friendship;  
It makes men's hearts sing.

Lucien J. Garneau



## FIRE:CAFE VENDOME

Yes

I've been afraid too  
just like the strangers  
at the fire today  
watching the officials dig  
in the rubble  
while the cold rain collected  
at the ends of the street  
like laughter.

Richard DiNatale

Oh mother I fear for our age.  
The winds rattled me in the plaza.  
At the movies I was scared.  
They shot people to pieces,  
and everyone was glad.  
I stayed up all night, remembering  
the blood.  
Till the sun rose in the east,  
and a bloody Merrimack  
chugged on toward dawn.

Richard DiNatale

## FOR WILLIAM BLAKE

Go ask the Sun about time  
that firey furnace clock  
that blanches  
the timeless desert ground  
and spouts the leaves to singing.  
Ah sunflower  
are you weary of time?  
If I were the sun,  
would you follow me,  
through my round of days,  
bending to me  
as I turned each blade of grass  
to fields of magic wands?

Richard DiNatale

## IMAGE-MAKING LOVE

And now  
the best of all  
is to be alone, to possess one's soul in silence.

Nakedly to be alone, unseen  
is better than anything else in the world,  
a relief like death.

Always  
at the core of me  
burns the small flame of anger, gnawing  
from trespassed contacts, from red-hot finger bruises, on my  
inward flesh.

Always  
in the eyes of those who loved me  
I have seen at last the image of him they loved  
and took for me  
mistook for me.

And always  
it was a simulacrum, something  
like me, and like a gibe at me.

So now I want, above all things  
to preserve my nakedness  
from the gibe of image-making love.

by D.H. Lawrence

Thoughts of a Six Year Old  
by  
Sandie Paulsen

When I grow up, I think I'd like to be a nurse. Nurses are kind and they make sick people feel better. I was in the hospital once, and my nurse always used to read me stories. I loved my nurse. When I grow up, I'd like kids to love me like that.

Or maybe I'll be a teacher. They're nice too. I'm in the first grade now and my teacher teaches us lots of things so we'll be smart when we grow up. I'd like to help kids be smart too.

But if I couldn't be a teacher, maybe I could be a librarian. I can read already. I read all the time, even when I don't have to. Librarians have lots of books and they share them with people. If I was a librarian, I'd share all my books too.

Last night I told mommy and daddy that when I grow up I might be a nurse, or a teacher, or a librarian. But they said I couldn't be any of those things. Gee, I wish I was a girl. They have all the luck.

## Journal Entry

Arthur Lake

I was sitting on a streetcar in Boston the other day. Sitting about two seats away from me was this woman I thought was unusual looking. I would say that she was about 55. She was kind of short and chubby. She had grey hair, kind of long, cut into a shag. She had lots of make-up on, sort of like she thought she was a movie star or something; and big, dangly earrings, lots of bracelets and other jewelry. She was dressed sort of like a teenager. She had on a tank top (she was kind of top heavy) and wide belled pants, and boots with about three inch heels. She was talking to the woman next to me, who didn't look at all her type. From what I gathered she worked in a big department store in town. She was talking five miles an hour about the woman she worked with, that she didn't like. While she was talking (she never stopped) she kept putting on and taking off her big movie star sunglasses.



### Cigarette Prayer

hung my head  
lit a cigarette.

Once, when lonely  
I prayed and  
could smell the dank earth  
took my baptism  
knew she would come  
the rain melted my heart  
and I was glad.

Watched the white bird  
as it flew circles  
overhead  
and returned  
to it's perch.

With lasting bliss  
I swore  
each cigarette hereafter  
would sing her song, sweet  
sweet.

Raised my head  
and saw her eyes  
my soul came alive  
    (smiling eyes)  
and we talked of the beginning  
of our world.

Douglas Travers

Not Guilty  
by  
Sandie Paulsen

The courtroom is empty - save for her. It is too early yet. But not for her. For her it is almost too late. Almost! Today she will hear the verdict. Today she will know for sure, whether or not she will be allowed to live.

She had been convicted five years earlier. But now, she is looking for a reprieve. Five years of hell is payment enough for anyone. Before that day, she had been happy enough. Alive at least. She had been young and full of dreams. Now she is old. Very old. And fighting to exist. The five years have done their damage. Each one has seen the death of a dream. Now there are none left.

Society is not kind to the criminal. Society has not been kind to her. She only did what they asked of her. No more, no less. But why then was she punished for following the rules? Her innocence is obvious, for she knew no other way. But society says ignorance of the law is no excuse.

Now she has only one chance left. Even if it is given to her, she will probably make no use of it. They have done their job well. Maybe too well.

The room is not empty now. She is asked to stand. She is without emotion as she listens to the decision. The small light left in her soul is too dim for others to see. But it is there. "The court has decided in your favor.

Divorce granted!!"

## Here At Frog Lake

by

Richard McLaughlin

There are twelve of us here at Frog Lake, not counting me. We've been living here for almost eight months; we'll have to leave soon. The weather is the best it can be for here right now - it can only get worse. If you look out along the line of Sunset Hills that surround Frog Lake and breathe deeply the green-heavy summertime air, you might not believe things could get bad here, but they can. I know they can. I dreamed it. That's why we're leaving.

I dreamed the water in Frog Lake turned hard and cold as smooth as grey stone and the Sunset Hills themselves were covered with cold white dust. The people could walk along the surface of the lake like it wasn't even there. They could walk out to the middle of Frog Lake and sit right at the base of the old Iron Frog. It was a frightful dream, in its own way. There wasn't a living green thing to be seen, all the leaves on all the trees were gone and everything everywhere, even the old Iron Frog, was covered with that cold white dust. Right away I figured, where are we going to get the strawberries? Where are we going to get the blueberries? And I was right, we would have to move.

## Sharleena

Sharleena is my partner. She came to Frog Lake eight months ago with the rest of us. We have been partners for a long time, but we do have our difficulties just like everyone else. She believes in time and I don't. Oh, I use time if and when it's convenient, just like my arithmetic, but personally I prefer art. Sharleena likes art too - in her own way, and even though she does believe in time - she likes to cast spells just like the rest of us. We all do like to cast spells. Sometimes we cast spells for each other and sometimes we all get together and work out extra special spells in our spare time.

All our time is spare time at Frog Lake, and I spend most of my spare time here with Sharleena. Of course, I also like to spend some of my spare time alone. When I'm alone I like to write.

### The Bird's Story

If I'm alone and I'm not writing and I have some spare time, I like to spend it feeding the birds, animals and fish that live here. I also like to water the plants. They all like me and I like them. I guess we all like each other in our own way. The birds are the most fun of all.

When I open the door to my shed, they fly down out of the pear trees singing the dinner song. Before I even know it, they are landing on my head and when I hold out my hands filled with blueberries, they come, one, sometimes two at a time, and begin the story. The birds have a strange way of telling a story for their dinner. It goes like this.

Usually one bird starts it off while the others are milling about my feet or flapping around my head. The bird that starts it off lands in my hand and says something like this: "There's a little town in Arkansas where Piney Creek meets the Arkansas River; it's called Piney Creek." Then he takes a blueberry and flies away. Next another bird will land right there on my outstretched hand and pick up where the first bird left off: "The town is not really a town at all, it's just a house here and a house there." Sometimes two birds at once will land on one hand. You might think that's difficult, but it's not - birds are really light even when they're big. It's very easy to hold two birds in one hand if they help you. Some birds can sit on the light from the moon. When two birds land on one hand, you might expect them to tell their part of the story as a duet, in harmony or something. But, they don't. They each tell their own part of the story, then they each take a blueberry and they fly off into the wind together.

## The Bird's Story (Cont.)

I've gotten a lot of strange and beautiful stories from the birds here. The last story I got from the birds was that one about Piney Creek. It isn't really about the town of Piney Creek or the Creek there. It's about a man and woman who lived there. Their names are Piney Joe and Lola, and their story is a good one. It is also the story of nine bantam hens that lived with them and a rooster named Pete. It's a long story and a good one, but it's also an old one, and I'll never get to write the story of Frog Lake if I get too deeply into Piney Creek.

I'd like to tell you about feeding the fish, and I would if I could, but I might not be able to...



### Feeding The Fish

I suppose I can. Feeding the fish is an important thing to do here at Frog Lake. It is also interesting and fun. I have special food here for the fish. It is made from milk, egg yolk, aquatic plants, kelp, day-fly eggs, oat flour, wheat germ oil, and cod liver oil. All these tasty treats are combined in a delicious and nutritious flake. I also feed them popcorn. They prefer popcorn, but the flake is better for them. I like the popcorn better myself. The flake smells like an old shoe that got lost in an old boat. When I feed them popcorn the goldfish get excited and pretend they're sharks. They hit that popcorn like it was twenty pounds of frozen hamburger. Next the horned pout see all this commotion and mosey up from the bottom to see what's going on. As soon as they figure it out they pretend they're trained porpoises and stand up on their tails in the water. They eat popcorn gently, like a snail eating corn on the cob.

There are ways to feed other animals and things. There are even ways to feed plants, but I've got to get on with the story. All these ways are stories of their own, every animal, plant, fish, and bird has his own way; and the way of every animal, plant, fish, and bird is a different story. Of course, they could all be parts of a bigger story, but I'd never finish writing it. I may never finish writing this story as it is.

## Feeding The Fish (Cont.)

Let's see, how far have we gotten? I've mentioned there are twelve of us, not counting me, and I did say some things about Frog Lake. I've told you a little bit about Sharleena, and I spent some time explaining about the birds and their story and the way they eat. Oh, yes, and I did tell you about the goldfish that pretend they're sharks, and the gentle snail-like way the horned pout have of eating popcorn.

I could go on now to tell you more about horned pout. Some people don't know what horned pout are, but I do. Horned pout are the shiny black fish that live on the bottom of Frog Lake. The best way to tell if the fish you're talking to is a horned pout is to look at his long black moustache. If he has one he is probably a horned pout, and if he doesn't, he probably isn't.

### The Gentle Way Of Snails

There are a lot of things I could talk about now and since I did mention the gentle way snails have of eating, I might as well go on and tell you a little more about them. Snails are the gentlest people I have ever seen, they are also very skillful. It takes a lot of skill and a certain amount of gentleness to walk along the ceiling of a pond or a lake, but I have seen them do it. It is a beautiful thing to see.

The ceiling of a lake is that almost imaginary line that separates the water from the air. On a really still day when there are no waves, the snails graze along the ceiling of the lake like buffalo. If you are looking at them from up here they have little horns on the front of their heads and their little mouths open and shut like buffalo eating invisible grass. If you are down on the bottom of the lake looking up at them, all you can see is their shells gliding along that imaginary line like big grey balloon in a green house. They are the gentlest creatures I've ever seen. I'd like to say they are the gentlest creatures there are, but I can't. There are gentler creatures I know of, but I've never seen them. They are so gentle, they live in tiny drops of mist that rise from the lake at sunrise. I'd like to get to know these creatures, but they're so tiny that I can't even see them; we live in different worlds.

## Following The Geese

As much as I don't like to talk about leaving here, there are some things I feel I should tell you. I'd like to tell you where we will be going, but I don't think I can. We aren't sure where we'll be going or exactly when we'll be leaving, but in a way it's already determined; we will be following the geese. That is, Sharleena and I will be following the geese. I'm not sure what the others will be doing. Some may follow the ducks, others may follow the coast. My friend Egg will probably follow the sun. Everyone will decide for themselves, their own way. I decided to go with the geese and Sharleena said that was OK with her for now. If she decides not to follow the geese that's up to her. She was following a river when I met her. At the time I was following the coast, when the river and the coast met, so did we. I guess that's the way it is.

Editor's Note: Here At Frog Lake is not complete in this issue of Parnassus. The concluding sections of the story will be published in the next issue.





Photograph by  
Steven Depoian

